

VZCZCXYZ0012
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLGB #0365 1441031
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 231031Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5327
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 0166
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY 0312
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 1127
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 1895
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY 0447
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 1220

UNCLAS KIGALI 000365

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EEB/TPP/MTA - CVOLTMER
DEPARTMENT FOR EEB/TPP/ABT - GCLEMENTS
DEPARTMENT FOR EEB/TPP/ABT - AWINTON
DEPARTMENT FOR EEB/IFD/ODF - MSIEMER
DEPARTMENT PASS FOR USDA/FAS - CJACKSON/MHOUSE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [TBIO](#) [KPAO](#)

SUBJECT: RWANDA RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S GLOBAL FOOD
SECURITY INITIATIVE

REF: A. STATE 52628

- [1](#)B. STATE 53346
- [1](#)C. STATE 52602
- [1](#)D. STATE 53353
- [1](#)E. KIGALI 0305

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Rwanda is a net importer of staple foods and supports initiatives aimed at improving agricultural productivity, increasing access to science and technology and removing barriers to trade in staple foods. The government of Rwanda (GOR) does not impose any official export restrictions on staple foods although some local infrastructure and market barriers continue to inhibit local and regional food distribution. The GOR is cognizant of the benefits of biotechnology and mindful that biotechnology products are becoming a reality in the region. Legislation governing national biotechnology and biosafety policy for Rwanda is currently in Parliament pending approval. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Emboffs met with Acting Secretary General Ministry of Agriculture - Pelagie Mukayiranga - and presented talking points of reftels a,b,d. The Acting Secretary General noted that Rwanda does not currently have sufficient domestic production of rice, wheat and maize and imports most food staples. Mukayiranga advised she was "not aware of any export restrictions" on agricultural staples and said the GOR supports measures that would improve regional food distribution. Local barriers to trade such as high transportation costs, inefficient market information systems and inadequate food storage facilities continue to inhibit local food distribution (Ref E).

[1](#)3. (U) Separately, Emboffs spoke with Mark Bagabe - Director of the Ministry of Agriculture Research Institute - who advised that a draft law governing biotechnology and biosafety is currently pending parliamentary approval. Bagabe noted that the GOR was "mindful of the realities of GM (genetically modified crops) and biotechnology" and aware that both

Kenya
and Uganda are moving forward with biotechnology programs. Bagabe
agreed
that biotechnology is needed to advance regional food security but was
not
able to advise when the new law would be approved or implemented.

ARIETTI